CLAIMS

1. A method in a computer system for delivering advertising to a user, the method comprising:

identifying the user;

selecting at least one character for the user;

selecting a message to be delivered by said at least one character to the user;

selecting an advertisement from a plurality of advertisements;

integrating said selected advertisement with said selected message to be delivered by said at least one character; and

presenting said at least one character to the user wherein said at least one character conveys said selected message integrated with said selected advertisement.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of adding words of said selected advertisement to words of said selected message.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of providing a background image for presenting said at least one character.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic of the user.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic of said at least one character.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one previous conversation between said at least one character and the user.

1   7.   The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2   selecting said advertisement randomly.

1   8.   The method of claim 1 wherein said selected message is delivered in a
2   language that is selected based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1   9.   The method of claim 1 wherein at least two advertisements are selected and
2   integrated into said selected message.

1   10.   The method of claim 1 wherein said delivery of said selected message as
2   displayed text or audio output is based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1   11.   The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is presented only as
2   audio output.

1   12.   The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is presented via a
2   wireless device.

1   13.   The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is presented via a
2   telephone.

1   14.   The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is a rendered
2   character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an animal, and a non-living object.

1   15.   The method of claim 1 wherein the computer system is a gaming device.

1   16.   The method of claim 1 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2   sending said at least one character to convey said selected message integrated with said
3   selected advertisement from a server computer to a user computer via a communication link.

1   17.   The method of claim 1 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2   displaying an image of said at least one character.

1   18.   The method of claim 1 wherein said selected message is delivered as displayed
2   text.

1   19.   The method of claim 18 wherein said displayed text is shown in a bubble near
2   the displayed image of said at least one character.

1   20.   The method of claim 1 wherein said selected message is delivered as audio
2   output.

1   21.   The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character presented delivers
2   said selected message during a conversation.

1   22.   The method of claim 21 wherein said conversation is with at least two of said
2   at least one character.

1   23.   The method of claim 21 wherein said conversation is with the user.

1   24.   The method of claim 21 wherein the user participates interactively in said
2   conversation with said at least one character.

1   25.   The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2   the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one advertising
3   requirement.

1   26.   The method of claim 25 wherein said at least one advertising requirement is to
2   present said selected advertisement during a certain percentage of user sessions.

1   27.   The method of claim 25 wherein said advertising requirement is to present

2   said selected advertisement at a certain frequency.

1   28.   A method in a computer system for delivering advertising to a user, the method
2   comprising:
3   selecting a message to be delivered by at least one character to the user;
4   selecting an advertisement from a plurality of advertisements;
5   integrating said selected advertisement with said selected message; and
6   presenting said at least one character to the user wherein said at least one character
7   conveys said selected message integrated with said selected advertisement.

1   29.   The method of claim 28 wherein said message is selected during a
2   conversation in which said at least one character is engaged.

1   30.   The method of claim 28 wherein said advertisement is selected when said at
2   least one character is presented to the user.

1   31.   The method of claim 28 wherein said advertisement is dynamically selected.

1   32.   The method of claim 28 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2   adding words of said selected advertisement to words of said selected message.

1   33.   The method of claim 28 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2   providing a background image for presenting said at least one character.

1   34.   The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3   of the user.

1   35.   The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3   of said at least one character.

1   36. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step

2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one previous

3 conversation between said at least one character and the user.

1   37. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step

2 comprises selecting said advertisement randomly.

1   38. The method of claim 28 wherein said selected message is delivered in a

2 language that is selected based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1   39. The method of claim 28 wherein at least two advertisements are selected and

2 integrated into said selected message.

1   40. The method of claim 28 wherein said delivery of said selected message as

2 displayed text or audio output is based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1   41. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is presented only as

2 audio output.

1   42. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is presented via a

2 wireless device.

1   43. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is presented via a

2 telephone.

1   44. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is a rendered

2 character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an animal, and a non-living object.

1   45. The method of claim 28 wherein the computer system is a gaming device.

1   46.   The method of claim 28 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of

2   sending said at least one character to convey said selected message integrated with said

3   selected advertisement from a server computer to a user computer via a communication link.

1   47.   The method of claim 28 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of

2   displaying an image of said at least one character.

1   48.   The method of claim 28 wherein said selected message is delivered as

2   displayed text.

1   49.   The method of claim 48 wherein said displayed text is shown in a bubble near

2   the displayed image of said at least one character.

1   50.   The method of claim 28 wherein said selected message is delivered as audio

2   output.

1   51.   The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character presented delivers

2   said selected message during a conversation.

1   52.   The method of claim 51 wherein said conversation is with at least two of said

2   at least one character.

1   53.   The method of claim 51 wherein said conversation is with the user.

1   54.   The method of claim 51 wherein the user participates interactively in said

2   conversation with said at least one character.

1   55.   The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step

2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one advertising

3   requirement.

1   56.   The method of claim 55 wherein said at least one advertising requirement is to

2   present said selected advertisement during a certain percentage of user sessions.

1   57.   The method of claim 55 wherein said advertising requirement is to present

2   said selected advertisement at a certain frequency.

1   58.   A method in a computer system for advertising during presentation of at least
2   one character engaged in a conversation, the conversation including a series of messages, the
3   method comprising:
4   during the conversation when the series of messages is to be delivered by the at least
5   one character, selecting an advertisement from a plurality of advertisements;
6   integrating said selected advertisement into said series of messages; and
7   controlling the delivery of said series of messages integrated with said selected
8   advertisement by the at least one character.

1   59.   The method of claim 58 wherein said advertisement is dynamically selected.

1   60.   The method of claim 58 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2   adding words of said selected advertisement to words of the series of messages .

1   61.   The method of claim 58 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2   providing a background image for presenting the at least one character.

1   62.   The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3   of the user.

1   63.   The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3   of the at least one character.

1   64.   The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one previous
3   conversation between the at least one character and the user.

1   65.   The method of claim 58 wherein the series of messages is delivered in a

2   language that is selected based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1   66.   The method of claim 58 wherein said controlling the delivery of the series of

2   messages as displayed text or audio output is based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1   67.   The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is presented only as

2   audio output.

1   68.   The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is presented via a

2   wireless device.

1   69.   The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is presented via a

2   telephone.

1   70.   The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is a rendered

2   character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an animal, and a non-living object.

1   71.   The method of claim 58 wherein the computer system is a gaming device.

1   72.   The method of claim 58 wherein said controlling step comprises the step of

2   sending the at least one character to convey the series of messages integrated with said

3   selected advertisement from a server computer to a user computer via a communication link.

1   73.   The method of claim 58 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of

2   displaying an image of the at least one character.

1   74.   The method of claim 58 wherein the conversation is with at least two of the at

2   least one character.

1   75.   The method of claim 58 wherein the conversation is with the user.

1   76.   The method of claim 58 wherein the user participates interactively in the
2   conversation with the at least one character.

1   77.   The method of claim 58 wherein the series of messages is delivered as audio
2   output.

1   78.   The method of claim 58 wherein the series of messages is delivered as
2   displayed text.

1   79.   The method of claim 78 wherein said displayed text is shown in a bubble near
2   the displayed image of the at least one character.

1   80.   The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2   comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one advertising
3   requirement.

1   81.   The method of claim 80 wherein said at least one advertising requirement is to
2   present said selected advertisement during a certain percentage of user sessions.

1   82.   The method of claim 80 wherein said advertising requirement is to present
2   said selected advertisement at a certain frequency.

1   83.   A system for delivering advertising to a user, the system comprising:

2   at least one server computer having an interface for communicating over a

3 computer network to the user, said at least one server computer further comprising;

4   an advertisement system contained within a computer usable medium

5   having computer readable program code embodied therein, said advertisement

6   system further comprising;

7   an advertisement component for controlling the selection of an

8   advertisement from a plurality of advertisements to be integrated in a

9   message; and

10   a conversation system for controlling the presentation of at least one

11   character along with the delivery of said message integrated with said

12   advertisement to the user.

1   84.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system

2 further comprises:

3   a user profile database for storing demographic information on a plurality of users

4 and for storing an indication of said plurality of advertisements that have been delivered

5 to said plurality of users.

1   85.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system

2 further comprises:

3   an advertiser profile database for storing characteristics of at least one advertiser,

4 wherein said characteristics are at least a one of a fee structure, at least one character type

5 an advertisement may be associated with, and criteria for displaying said advertisement.

1   86.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system

2 further comprises:

3   an advertisement database for storing said plurality of advertisements and for

4 storing characteristics of said plurality of advertisements.

1   87.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system

2   further comprises:

3   a character profile database for storing characteristics of said at least one

4   character.

1   88.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system

2   further comprises:

3   a conversation history database for identifying at least one type of message and at

4   least one type of advertisement to be delivered to the user.

1   89.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system

2   further comprises:

3   a web engine for receiving requests for Web pages from a plurality of users over

4   said computer network, for forwarding said requests to said conversation system, for

5   receiving generated Web pages from said conversation system, and for sending said

6   generated Web pages through said interface over said computer network to said plurality

7   of users.

1   90.   The system according to claim 83 wherein said computer network is the

2   Internet.

1   91.   A system for delivering advertising, the system comprising:

2   at least one user computer running a browser application having access to at least

3 one server computer via a communications link, said at least one user computer further

4 comprising;

5   a display device for presenting a character, wherein said character

6 communicates a message having an advertisement integrated with said message

7 received from said at least one server computer; and

8   an input device for sending a response to said at least one server computer

9 regarding said message having said integrated advertisement.

1   92.   The system according to claim 91 wherein said at least one user computer

2 further comprises:

3   a speaker for displaying as audio output said message having an advertisement

4 integrated with said message communicated by said character.

1   93.   The system according to claim 91 wherein said character is displayed on

2 said display device as a rendered character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an

3 animal, and a non-living object.

1   94.   The system according to claim 91 wherein said at least one user computer

2 is a gaming device.

1   95.   The system according to claim 91 wherein said message having an

2 advertisement integrated with said message is displayed as text on said display device.